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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Civil Air Patrol's Northeast Region to hold search-and-rescue competition at Westover Air Base**

**WESTOVER AIR RESERVE BASE, Chicopee, Mass.** — The Northeast Region of the Civil Air Patrol, the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary, will host a comprehensive search-and-rescue competition (SARCOMP) at Westover Air Reserve Base over the weekend of May 22-24. This event is being held with the cooperation of the U.S. Air Force and the Air Reserve Base Command at Westover, home to the 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing.

Lt. Col. Joe Abegg, incident commander for the exercise, said the SARCOMP would feature over 235 Civil Air Patrol (CAP) personnel, more than 30 aircraft and 30 ground vehicles. Competition events, which take place Saturday the 23rd, include air and ground team ELT (emergency locator transmitter) searches, inspections, and written exams. Awards will be presented on Sunday.

Teams from each of the nine state wings comprising the Northeast Region have been invited to participate and compete against one other, making this one of the largest endeavors ever organized by Northeast Region headquarters. In fact, noted Lt. Colonel Abegg, the SARCOMP is being considered a dry run for a possible nation-wide search-and-rescue competition. This is the second Northeast Region SARCOMP to be held at Westover, with the first having taken place over the 2007 Memorial Day Weekend.

One of CAP's congressionally chartered missions, emergency services (ES), is to save lives and mitigate suffering and loss of property, as well as support other life-saving agencies. "The purpose of the SARCOMP is to practice and test mobility readiness, foster esprit de corps, and enhance mission skills through open competition," Lt. Colonel Abegg said. "Such exercises motivate participants to train to be the best."

*Westover Air Reserve Base is the nation's largest Air Force Reserve base. Currently, 2,500 reservists are assigned to the wing at Westover. The host wing, the 439th Airlift Wing, is capable of providing worldwide air movement of troops, supplies, equipment and medical*

*patients. Westover is home to 16 C-5 cargo aircraft nicknamed "Galaxy." C-5s are the largest aircraft in the Air Force and specialize in missions involving outsized and oversized cargo that no other aircraft can carry. Westover is largest base because of LAND MASS (2500 acres.*

***Civil Air Patrol**, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with almost 60,000 members nationwide. CAP performs 95 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief, and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state, and local agencies. The members take a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the almost 25,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 60 years.*

On the Web: [www.ner.cap.gov](http://www.ner.cap.gov)

**NOTE: Media interested in attending the event should contact Capt Jim Ridley in order to secure base clearance.**

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